

to their families. I hope their families know that citizens pray for their comfort and their strength. Whether they were the first one who lost their life in Iraq or recently lost their lives in Iraq, that every life is precious in our sight.

And I guess my one thought I wanted to leave with those who still hurt is that one day people will look back at this moment in history and say, "Thank God there were courageous people willing to serve, because they laid the foundations for peace for generations to come." That I have vowed in the past, and I will vow so long as I'm President, to make sure that those

lives were not lost in vain; that, in fact, there is a outcome that will merit the sacrifice that civilian and military alike have made; that our strategies going forward will be aimed at making sure that we achieve victory, and therefore, America becomes more secure, these young democracies survive, and peace more likely as we head into the 21st century.

So, Madam Secretary, I'm honored to be here. And I thank you very much for your hard work and your dedication.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the 2008 Bassmaster Classic Champion and 2007 Women's Bassmaster Tour Champion March 25, 2008

The President. I've got the fishing champs from this year. And, Judy, thanks for coming.

Judy Wong. Oh, thank you.

The President. She is from Many, Louisiana. She won the Women's Bassmaster. And Alton Jones from Waco, Texas, won the Bassmaster Classic.

And I thought it was important to welcome these champs here to the White House so that—you know, to encourage people to fish. There's nothing better than fishing. I had a fantastic experience with Alton and our friend Charlie Pack. He was a famous local fisherman, and he said, "Do you want to go fishing with a fellow named Jones?" I said: "I've never heard of him. There's a lot people named Jones." [Laughter] It turns out, the man I was fishing with is the—wins the Bassmaster Classic.

This is a good, clean sport. It's a sport that requires good conservation in order to make sure our fisheries are good. And I love welcoming the champs here. And so we're glad you're here.

Ms. Wong. Thank you.

The President. The people in Louisiana and Texas are proud of you.

Alton Jones. Well, it's an honor to be here. You know, fishing with you, I've got to say that President Bush is actually a very good fisherman and a great conservationist. And I'm really not sure who's working who here. I'm hoping to get an invite to fish on his lake in Crawford.

The President. That's right.

Mr. Jones. And he's looking for a free fishing guide. [Laughter]

Ms. Wong. I would be glad to take you any day on Toledo Bend.

The President. That's good.

Ms. Wong. Okay.

The President. Well, thank you, Judy.

Ms. Wong. And bring Laura as well.

The President. Well, yes, she's—I'm a good fisherman; sometimes I'm a good catcher-man. [Laughter]

Mr. Jones. There's a big difference.

The President. Yes, there is. Anyway, thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his

remarks, he referred to TV host and fisherman Charlie Pack.

Remarks Following Discussions With King Hamad bin Isa al-Khalifa of Bahrain
March 25, 2008

President Bush. Your Majesty, welcome back to Washington. It is such a pleasure to see you. I still have such fond memories of our trip to the Kingdom of Bahrain. His Majesty and I were reminiscing about the sword dance that you put on. It was spectacular. And you've got a—not only do you have a beautiful country, but you've got a prosperous country and a country that is a great friend of the United States. It's just such a honor to welcome you back here.

We had a good discussion—and we'll continue our discussion over lunch—on a variety of subjects. First, I do want to thank the Kingdom for sending an ambassador to Iraq. That's a very strong move that indicates a willingness to lead, as well as a willingness to send a signal that when a young democracy like Iraq is beginning to make progress, that it is important for the neighborhood to recognize that progress. And I really do want to thank Your Majesty for that.

We talked about security measures, the need to work together on joint security operations. I congratulated His Majesty on Bahrain's leadership of a joint task force that's—that is enabling nations to learn how to work together in order to keep the peace.

All in all, it's been what you would expect: a visit that's cordial and comfortable and amongst friends. And so, Your Majesty, welcome back, and thank you for coming.

King Hamad. Thank you. Thank you. I would like to thank the President for his kind invitation and his great support to Bahrain and to the stability and prosperity of our region.

And concerning sending back ambassador—an ambassador to Iraq, Iraq is an Arab state. Iraq is a founder of the Arab League, so it deserves all the support that it can get from other brother Arabs.

And the discussion today focused on bilateral relations concerning the free trade agreement, which we have signed, and concerning the energy as well, which yesterday was signed by the Secretary of State and our Foreign Minister. And we talked about security matters, which really are the most important issue for maintaining the development and the prosperity in our region.

And I came all the way to thank the President for what he has done for Bahrain and for our region and for the whole world—stability and security in fighting terrorism and extremism. And we hope we achieve our common goals by having a stable world.

So thank you, Mr. President. Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you, Majesty. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:32 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. King Hamad referred to Minister of Foreign Affairs Khalid bin Ahmad al-Khalifa of Bahrain.